

Cultural Contact and the Patterns of Ibibio Personal Names: A Morpho-Syntactic Analysis

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Abstract

This article examines the changing patterns of Ibibio personal names due to the contact of Ibibio with the English language. The article takes a brief survey of how Ibibio people came in contact with English and discusses the various implications of the contact on Ibibio personal names. The researcher employs library research methodology and personal observation of the patterns of names by Ibibio people using her students of Ibibio extraction. This is particularly easy because the researcher is a native speaker of Ibibio. The article examines morpho-syntactically the patterns of Ibibio names before colonialism, during the post-colonial period and in the contemporary society. From the findings presented in this article it concluded that Ibibio names are no longer what they were.

Keywords: *Ibibio, personal names, morpho-syntax, changes*

Introduction

English came to Nigeria before the slave trade in 1553 when some British traders first came to “the Ports of Benin and old Calabar” (Alabi, 1994). Their major challenge of those British was communication barrier between them and the natives, a hindrance which prompted them to teach the language to the natives. This initiative was further boosted with the advent of colonialism, the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade and the coming of the missionaries to Nigeria. The greatest surviving influence of colonialism in Nigeria is the English Language due to missionary activities, particularly in Southern and Western parts of the country. The Missionaries taught the language to the natives, principally to enable them read the Bible and serve as interpreters. A crop of speakers of this foreign language began to emerge as clerks. With the establishment of missionary schools and the introduction of English as school subject, the number of those educated in the language increased and this was the onset of the dwindling importance of native languages in the country though the effect was not yet overt at that time. The ability to speak English gave an added impetus to the speakers because they were the only ones who could interact freely with the strangers (the white men).

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These speakers became the early elite and the cynosure of their society.

With independence in 1960, English became the official language in Nigeria. Only those who could speak English were involved in the governance. Those who wanted to belong had to learn the language. Overtime, the language which came as a foreign language has become the language of official communication, politics, and law, education, commerce, religion and the language of integration and inter-ethnic communication. It has become the first language in most homes, whether highly educated or not. Above all, the language has become acculturated and domesticated. Bamgbose (1995:26) observes that English language has undergone some modifications in the Nigerian environment to the extent that “it has been pidginised, nativised, acculturated and twisted to express unaccustomed concepts and modes of interaction. Most importantly, “English has been given Nigerian citizenship, just as a domestic servant does what the master requires, English in Nigeria is made to do precisely what Nigerians want it to do” (Adegbija, 2004:20). This adopted citizen has had a tremendous impact on the psyche of the people of the different ethnic communities in Nigeria in one way or the other.

Apart from its sojourn in Nigeria resulting in the emergence of Nigerian English as a sub-set of world Englishes, it has also resulted in the different varieties of Nigerian English. However, the issue in question is the cultural influence of English in Nigeria with reference to the Ibibio people. This paper discusses the cultural impact of English as observed in the changing patterns of Ibibio personal names.

The Ibibio People

Ibibio is the 4th largest ethnic group in Nigeria after Hausa as the first, Yoruba as the second and Igbo as the third. The Ibibio people are found in Akwa Ibom state located in the Niger-Delta region of the country. Ibibio is the name of the ethnic community as well as the name of the language. Ibibio speakers are also found in Cross River State. Ibibio language belongs to the Niger-Congo family of the Delta-Cross sub-family of the Lower-Cross family within the Cross-River group of languages. The speakers of this language are engaged in fishing, farming, trading, commercial activities, civil service work and missionary activities. These people are also highly educated. Ibibio is the lingua franca in the area since other ethnic communities like

Oron, Eket, Itu Mbon Uso speak Ibibio apart from other small group languages in the state Ibibio is therefore both the lingua franca and the language of unification of the people.

The language is used alongside English as the language of official communication in government functions. Moreover, Ibibio is a developed language. It has a dictionary, primers, readers and literary works written in it. It is taught in higher learning institutions in the State like University of Uyo in the Department of Linguistics and Communication Studies and in the Akwa Ibom State College of Education in the Department of Nigerian Languages. It is one of the school subject examined by West African Examinations Council (WAEC) and National Examinations Council (NECO). A credit pass in Ibibio is accepted for as part of total number of credits a candidate requires to be admitted into any higher learning institution in Nigeria as English does. Christianity is the main religion of the people.

Ibibio and the English Language

Since English came to the Ibibio people through the Britons, it has been used alongside the indigenous language – Ibibio. Ibibio, like any natural language, has grammatical classes like nouns, verbs, pronouns, adjectives, etc. Ibibio nouns are of different types. They can serve as naming words as in *ete* meaning ‘father’, *usan* meaning ‘plate’. They can express an abstract state as in *inima* meaning ‘love’, *uyai* meaning ‘beauty’. They can express concreteness as in *eto* meaning ‘tree’, *ufok* which means ‘house’. The nouns can also express the singular – plural opposition as in *owunwaan* (singular) ‘woman’ and *ibaaan* ‘women’ (plural), *owudeen* (singular) ‘man’ and *ideen* (plural) ‘men’, *ayin* meaning ‘a child’ (singular) and *ndito* ‘children’ (plural).

In Ibibio, nouns are symbols of entities, abstract or concrete, countable or uncountable, animate or inanimate, human or non-human. Stockwell (1977) has said the same about English nouns. These inherent features are arranged hierarchically in a natural order. If it is a human noun, then it is animate; if it is animate, then countable, and if it is countable, then concrete. Ibibio nouns are divided into two semantic classes – proper and common nouns.

Proper nouns indicate specific individuals, places and things while her common nouns refer to any member of a class of persons, places or things. This class of nouns may be concrete or abstract. Nouns

denoting concrete or abstract entities in the language are sometimes adopted as personal names. These semantic notions are expressed in such personal names asidoronyin “hope”, and *mbuotidem* meaning “faith”. Others include *eto* ‘tree’, *itiat* ‘rock’, *ufok* ‘house’. Ibibio therefore has a naming system. Ibibio nouns may be analysed in terms of their inherent features and semantic properties.

According to Weinreich (1953) when languages come in contact there are bound to be influences. The influence of English on the Ibibio people and their personal names as a result of cultural contact is wide and vast with some implications. English has influenced Ibibio culture in her mode of worship, dressing, food, language and personal names. Language is part of the culture of the people. English has been acculturated among the people; it has adapted to the subtleties and idiosyncrasies of Ibibio culture and its language. Apart from the use of English as the first language of most homes, it has also influenced the Ibibio personal naming system. This is discussed in detail below.

The Changing Patterns of Ibibio Personal Names

Essien, (1986, 2004), Edet, (2007) as well as Bubu and Offiong (2014) have discussed Ibibio names from morpho-syntactic, philosophical and sociological perspectives. This work on Ibibio names is an improvement on and a further contribution to knowledge on Ibibio names especially with the emphasis on the changing patterns of Ibibio personal names as a result of cultural contact and Christianity.

There is actually a correlation between names and the socio-cultural life of a people (Kuschel, 1988). Adebija (2003:353) remarks that “each ethnic group expresses and identifies itself by the language it speaks and its cultural paraphernalia is shaped by its language.” Mensah and Offiong (2014:42) observe that “African names give insights into African culture and identity”, while Essien (2004:112) asserts that “there is a relation between a name and a namee.”

In the Western world, names are just labels but in Ibibio, as it is in most other African ethnic communities names have meanings of importance and have an aura around the bearers. This is why parents think through the names given to their children. There is a rich body of literature on names and naming practices among the Ibibio people (Essien, 1986, 2000, 2014; Edet, 2007; Mensah & Offiong, 2013; Bubu & Offiong, 2014), among others. Essien (2004) says that Ibibio

grammatical structure may be studied through her personal names. He states:

Names are of such importance to the Ibibio that they are part and parcel of their language, not just mere words like John, Kurt, Susan, Robertson, etc. which happen to be tagged to some individuals for identity, but also a reflection of the grammatical structure of the language, in addition to their individual lexical meaning. Thus if one were to collect all Ibibio names, one would have collected a significant part of the grammar of the language. It is therefore possible to learn basic Ibibio through a collection of Ibibio names.

This suggests that in the discussion of Ibibio names both its morphological and syntactic structures are incorporated. The source gives the syntactic manifestation of Ibibio grammar to include nouns, noun modifiers, numerals, noun phrases, verbs, verb phrases, some morphological processes and full sentences. This work will look at Ibibio personal names and also bring to the fore the effect of English and Christianity on Ibibio personal names.

A Historical Survey of Ibibio Personal Names

Names are used to assign labels to entities, whether real or abstract, for easy reference. That is why everything has a name. Our focus is on Ibibio personal names. The personal names are discussed in different phases to bring out their changing patterns as well as show the effect of the changes on the language. However, Ibibio names have rich morphological and syntactic structures.

Genderlisation of Ibibio Personal Names

In Ibibio, the noun category is specified either morphologically or syntactically under number, gender and case. Gender, which is our area of concentration, is the distinction in language which corresponds to sex in real life. Lyons (1977:248) describes gender as “the classification of nouns for pronominal reference or concord.” Gender marking can be lexical, in which it identifies sex of real world entities, or grammatical, showing grammatical relations between words in a sentence. It is the lexical gender that is the focus of this analysis. In Ibibio, just as it is with other human languages like English, gender marking partitions nouns into masculine, feminine, neuter and common. In Ibibio, gender is more marked on nouns than in pronouns.

Many decades ago, Ibibio names were systematically given and not haphazardly done as suggested by Bubu and Offiong (2014). Personal names were gender specific and one could tell the sex of the bearer of a name without seeing the bearer.

Table 1: Ibibio Names According to Gender

Masculine	Feminine
<i>Efioñ</i>	<i>Afioñ</i>
<i>Okon</i>	<i>Akon/Okonanwan</i>
<i>Ekpo</i>	<i>Ekponwan</i>
<i>Essien</i>	<i>Essienanwan</i>
<i>Edem</i>	<i>Edemanwan</i>
<i>Asukwo</i>	<i>Ikwo</i>

For some, the female gender names are realised through the process of suffixation. The word element *-anwan* is prefixed to the male gender form to derive the female equivalent name *okonanwan*, *ekponwan*, *essienanwan* and *edemanwan*, respectively. *Effioñ* was the name of a boy born in *fioñaran* which is a market day while *Afioñ* was a girl born in this market day. *Okon* was given to a male child born at night while the female born at night was called *Akon/Okonanwan*. Furthermore, *Ekpo* was the name of a boy born during the season of masquerades while the female counterpart was called *Ekponwan*. *Essien*, which means the male child the family lineage depends on was the name of a male child with *Essienanwan* as the female counterpart. *Edem*, which means the last son of the family, had *Edemanwan* as the feminine gender. However, not all names showed the opposition between masculine and feminine. Names like *Ekpe*, ‘lion’, *itiat* ‘stone’, *asabo* ‘python’, *anwa* ‘cat’ etc. belong to this class. These names were specifically born by the male gender. Names like *Offioñ* meaning ‘moon’ was unisex. However, as at that time most names were gender-specific.

Ibibio names are of different types. Essien (2004) states that the different categories of names common among the Ibibio people were those related to order of birth, traditional deities, market days, certain abstract concepts and institutions. Ibibio naming practices were sometimes descriptive of locations where the child was born. Such names include *udua* “a child born in the market”, *inwañ* “a child born in the farm”, *Idim* a child born in the stream.

Some other names were related to the time and event when the child was born as *Edet* for a male child delivered during the traditional market day of *Etaha* and *Arit* for the female counterpart born during *Edetetaha* market day. *Ekoñ* “war” and *Usenekoñ* “the day of war” were given to children born during the war.

Some other names described real world entities. Such names included those in the following table:

Table 2: Names Related to Real World Entities

Name	Gloss
<i>Edet</i>	teeth
<i>Eto</i>	tree
<i>Ikpañ</i>	spoon
<i>Usen</i>	day
<i>Etop</i>	news
<i>Udia</i>	yam
<i>Enyoñ</i>	sky

Names related to real world entities are principally concrete nouns. These names and the ones before are mostly common nouns.

Some other names were related to geographical features and the environment as can be seen in the table below:

Table 3: Names Related to Geographical Features

Name	Gloss
<i>Inyañ</i>	river
<i>Isoñ</i>	earth
<i>Utin</i>	sun
<i>Ekarika</i>	harmattan
<i>Obot</i>	nature
<i>Idim</i>	stream
<i>Akai</i>	forest

Some other names were related to the human body depending on the circumstances in which the child was born as can be seen in Table 4:

Table 4: Names Related to the Human Body

Name	Gloss
<i>Itoñ</i>	neck
<i>Ekod</i>	backhead
<i>Ibuod</i>	head

<i>Ikpat</i>	foot
<i>Udom/Ubokudom</i>	right hand

These names were symbolic expressions of some meaning to the namee. Children were also named according to their order of birth within the family as in:

Table 5: Names Related to Order of Birth

Name	Gloss
<i>Akpan</i>	first-born son
<i>Udo</i>	second-born son
<i>Udofia</i>	third-born son
<i>Udosen</i>	forth-born son
<i>Adiaha</i>	first-born daughter
<i>Etukafia</i>	third-born daughter

Mensah and Offiong (2014) classify the third son and those after him differently. In their classification, *Udoudo* is the third son, *Etukudo* is the fourth while *Udofia* is the fifth. The fact is that *Udofia* is the most dominant label for the third son and some other variations like *Ufot*, *Udoudo* and *Etukudo* are variants based on different clans while *Udosen* is the fourth.

Sometimes, the name of a child was drawn from the mother in polygamous families where the man married very many wives. Such names included *Akpadiaha* “the first son of the first daughter.” It is a derived nominal involving the combination of *Akpan* the first son and *Adiaha*, the first daughter. This name involves segment deletion whereby the final segment in the first word is deleted before it is attached to the second nominal for ease of articulation.

Some other names were based on family lineage as in *Ubon* “the ^{child} the family lineage depends on” and *Essien* which initially had the same connotation as *Ubon* but later added the meaning of a child born out of wedlock.

Some other names were descriptive of the emotional state of the parents. These names, though negative overtly expressing pain, agony, abandonment and fear were rather cast with a positive expectation:

Table 6: Negative	Denotation Names
Name	Gloss
<i>Ndarake</i>	I do not celebrate
<i>Mkpoñonyoñ</i>	leaves tomorrow
<i>Nkaimaha</i>	not loved by peers
<i>Mkpa</i>	death
<i>Ukut</i>	sorrow
<i>Usua</i>	hatred
<i>Esuene</i>	disgrace

Mensah and Offiong refer to them as death prevention names. These names express abstract concepts which denote pains.

Some Ibibio names of this era also had their roots in animals like *Ekpe* “lion”, *ewa* “dog”, *anwa* “cat” etc. The names in Tables 1 – 6 were mostly root words of the noun class. Very few were derived nominals.

Names Derived through Reduplication

Some Ibibio names were products of reduplication. In reduplication, a morphological element is repeated to create a new word or for grammatical reasons (Trask, 1993). Such Ibibio names include *Etetim* coined from *Etim + Etim*, *Efion* coined from *Efion + Efion*, *Okokon* formed from *Okon + Okon* and *Akpakpan* which is a combination of *Akpan + Akpan*. The reduplication performs lexical function. These names are formed through the duplication of the noun root. These names involve segment deletion in the root word and the subsequent repetition of the root. The product of this morphological process is the formation of a new word. This type of reduplication name is usually given as father’s namesake since the father sees the child as the image of himself. This is analogous with Robertson and Jepherson in English.

Another type of reduplicated personal names emanates from the reduplication of the verb root and the addition of a prefix. This is shown in Table 7 below:

Table 7: Ibibio Names as Reduplicated Nominals

Verb	Gloss	Derived Noun	Gloss
<i>Kere</i>	think/worry	ekikere	thought
<i>Kere</i>	think	ñkereke	not thinking/worried
<i>Dioñ</i>	bless	edidioñ	blessing
<i>Nyaña</i>	deliver	edinyaña	deliverance

All the nominals are derived through the reduplication of the root by attaching the morphemes *eki-* and *edĩ-* to the root verbs while *ĩkerekere* involves the third person concord marker *ĩ-* and the negative marker *-ke* to drive the name. These names are however classified among second generation Ibibio names.

Names Formed through Compounding

Some other names formed through the process of word formation are *Akpabio* derived from the combination of two free lexical morphemes *Akpan* the “first son” and *Obio* “village”. The name means the crown prince. There is also *Akpabot* derived from the combination of *Akpan* and *Obot* “nature” meaning son of the earth and *Akpadiaha* earlier mentioned. In these examples, one of the compound words *Akpan* is endocentric. In endocentric compounds, one of the compound words functions as the semantic head. The meaning of the whole form is predicted by the meaning of the constituent parts. There is therefore, a head-modifier relationship in these names in which *Adiaha*, *Obot* and *Obio* are the modifiers of the head *Akpan* in post-position. They attribute the property of headship position to the word in conformity to Spenser’s (1991) argument on the function of modifier element which usually attributes property to the head just as an adjective does.

Verbal Derivative Names

There were other names which were simple derivatives through the morphological process of prefixation as in *Afia* “white” derived from the verb *fia* “be white”, *Idiok* “bad” derived from the verb *diok* “be bad”, *uwa* sacrifice derived from the verb *wa* “make sacrifice” and *Eseme* “lamentation” derived from the verb *seme* “lament”. These are instances of verbal derivatives. In verbal derivation, a noun is derived from the verb through the addition of certain affixes (Ndimele, 1996). The affixes attached to the verbs to derive the names are *a-*, *i-*, *u-* and *e-* respectively. *Afia* and *idiok* are adjectives while *uwa* and *eseme* are nouns adopted as names. The derived nouns are instances of nominalisation and adjectivisation. The underlying verbs and the derived nominals share the same semantic notion. The derived nominals undergo some morphological processes of affixation. The principles of vowel harmony and phonological conditioning of allomorphs relate the prefixes *a-*, *i-*, *u-* *e-* with their stems.

The examples discussed so far are instances of verbal nouns in Ibibio. Verbal nouns are nominalised verbs or deverbal nouns which may be a

single lexical item or a complex structure (Chomsky, 1970). These names are related to the semantic category of action.

Second Generation Personal Names

Second generation personal names have Christian Religion undertone as a result of the advent of Christianity. Ibibio names of this era are majorly products of nominalisation. Nominalisation is a category changing process whereby words of other grammatical classes, phrases and clauses behave as nouns and occupy typical noun positions in what Comrie & Thompson (1985) refer to “turning something into a noun”. Products of nominalisation in the language include verbal derivatives, gerundives, agentive nominals, instrumental nominal and reduplication nominal. Such names were like those in Table 8:

Table 8: Native Names Related to Christianity

Word	Gloss	Prefix	Derivation	Gloss
<i>mem</i>	be soft	e-	emems	peace
<i>ma</i>	love	i-	ima	love
<i>fon</i>	be good	m-	mfon	god's
grace				
<i>dara</i>	be joyous	i-	idara	joy
<i>no</i>	give	e-	eno	gift
<i>me</i>	endure	i-	ime	patience

These names are derived through prefixation whereby a bound morpheme is attached to a verb root. For instance, the verbs *mem* “be soft”, *ma*, “love”, *fon* “be good”, *dara* “be joyful”, *no* “give” etc. are derived through the prefixation of *e-*, *i-*, *m-*, to each root verb to derive the names. This derivation process conforms with Crystal’s (1991) postulation that nominalisation is not actually a basic noun but a derivational process in which non-noun lexical items are converted to the noun class. The second generation names were scarcely sentential except in few cases like *uwem + edi + imo* “life is wealth” and *Enefiok* “who knows?”

Ibibio Names as Transformations

Ibibio personal names are derived both lexically and transformationally. The examples of Ibibio personal names earlier considered fall under the former. Essien (1990) says that nominalization is the transformation of a sentence into a noun phrase while Chomsky (1970) argues that certain nominals are

transformations while others are lexically derived. Some Ibibio personal names are noun phrases as the following entries show:

Names as Genitive Constructions

Gradually, Ibibio names became more of grammatical constructions than ordinary nouns as in the following:

Table 9: Names as Genitive Constructions

Name	Gloss
<i>Eno + Abasi</i> Gift God	god's gift
<i>Ini + Abasi</i> Time God	god's time
<i>Ima + Abasi</i> Love god	god's love
<i>Uduak + Abasi</i>	god's will

These words are of the “of” genitive in Ibibio whereas they mark the – ‘s genitive in English. They mean ‘gift of god’, ‘at god’s time’, ‘love of god’ and ‘will of God’ respectively. These names depict the people’s absolute faith in God and acknowledgement of his benevolence. The other forms of these names are *Enoboñ*, *Inioboñ*, *Imaoboñ* and *Uduakoboñ*. *Oboñ* means king which acknowledges God as the heavenly king. Before now, the head word *Abasi* or *Oboñ* was in the deep structure but overtime it becomes a surface realisation thereby making the names noun phrases since only nouns and pronouns can undergo genitive constructions. These names are derived through the morphological process of compounding in which two free morphemes that have independent existence are combined to form new words.

Names as Declarative Sentences

Some names of this era were declarative sentences which made some assertions. The names are also derived through the morphological process of compounding as in the following:

Table 10: Names as Statements of Assertion

Names	Gloss
<i>Ekom + enyene + Abasi</i> Thanks be god	Thanks be to God.
<i>Ofon + Ime</i> Good patient	It is good to be patient.
<i>Ekem + Ini</i>	It is time.

Right time
Mmenyene + Abasi I have a god.

These names conform to SVO sentence structure in which there is an agreement between the subject and the verb. In *Ekomenyeneabasi*, *Ekom* ‘thanks’ is the subject, *enyene* ‘be’ is the verb and *abasi* is God. *O-* in *Ofonime*, *e-* in *Ekemini* are third person singular markers while *m-* in *Mmenyene* is first person singular marker while the root verbs are *nyene* “have”, *fon* “be good”, *kem* “to be right” respectively each of which is followed by their respective objects. These names are formed through the process of affixation and complementation whereby the verb root *kom*, *fon* and *nyene* are complemented by the objects *abasi*, *ime* and *ini*. This nominalization process is very productive in the language since so most verbs in natural languages subcategorise an NP complement.

Names as Imperative Sentences

Imperative constructions utter commands or make polite requests. They have no overt grammatical subject but use the base form of the verb. *Ibibio*, like English does not have any grammatical form to express imperatives but uses the simple possible form of the verb:

Table 11: Imperative Sentences as Names

Names	Gloss
<i>Toro obon</i> Praise God	praise God.
<i>Nyene ime</i> Have patience	be patient.
<i>Yak no abasi</i> leave / give god	leave it to God. / let go.
<i>Eyakndue</i>	let me be guilty.

These names as sentences have no overt subject but the implied subject *Afo* (*you*). The personal pronoun *Afo* in *Ibibio* does not have any specific referent but is a generalised subject to all the persons except it. This corroborates Ndimele (2003) assertion that imperative sentences have implied subject on the surface structure with the second person singular pronoun *you*. The last two examples conform to what Mensah and Offiong call “Let command names”. The names have the tone of concession. All these names are products of transformation.

Names as Questions

Questions are interrogative devices with a simple sentence structure used to elicit a response. Questions usually require a verbal response from the addressee and may be wh- or yes-no type.

Table 12: Names as Questions Sentences

Name	Gloss
<i>Mbosowo</i>	What have I done to people?
<i>Nsikakabasi</i>	What is difficult for God?
<i>Aniefon</i>	Who is good?
<i>Ndipmmonuwem</i>	Where do I hide (my) life?
<i>Nsini</i>	What time?
<i>Aniebietabasi</i>	Who is like God?

These expressions are majorly rhetorical questions and by their nature do not elicit verbal response since they are not directed at any one but an elocutionary assertion of a suppressed emotion. These names contain pragmatic information which states the direct opposite of what the speaker intends (Han, 2002). Structurally, *m-*, *nsi-* and *anie-* are wh- questions markers in Ibibio and they combine with the predicator to form the structure of these questions. It can be observed from the examples that second generation Ibibio names are mostly agglutinating because Ibibio is also an agglutinating language (Essien, 1990).

It can be observed that Ibibio personal names have become more heavenward emphasizing Christian virtues and values. Even though these virtues had existed in the traditional society (Essien, 1986) but they are more orchestrated in personal names in the modern times. Personal names of this era became unisexual.

The Third Phase of Ibibio Personal Names

Interestingly, the advent of Pentecostalism among Ibibio people has brought radical changes in their mode of worship, sermons, church music, musical instruments and dress code with English as the dominant language in all church activities. This has moved Ibibio personal names from the heavenward names in the native language to innovative heavenward names in English. A cursory look at the names of my students, specifically those of Ibibio extraction shows this.

Table 13: Pentecostalism Motivated Names

Names	Gloss
<i>Enwoño</i>	Promise
<i>Inemesit</i>	Happiness
<i>Ito</i>	Praise
<i>Uduakabasi</i>	Godswill
<i>Edidioñ</i>	Blessing
<i>Idara/Idaresit</i>	Joy
<i>Mkpouto</i>	Treasure
<i>Mfoniso</i>	Goodluck
<i>Nsoñurua</i>	Precious
<i>Utibe</i>	Miracle
<i>Oduduabasi</i>	God's power

The English names have become predominant while names in indigenous language are fast disappearing with very few children given native names by their parents.

Cultural Implications of the Changing Patterns

Ibibio names have always reflected communal life, practices, values and shared meanings. Naming tells the story of the people and is also a mark of identity and creates cultural consciousness. However, as Looker (1996:28) remarks “individuals actions can sometimes alter the cultural norms” and this is true of the actions of Ibibio Christians. Naming is part of language. By losing a name, it is possible to lose the elements or residuum of that language, and by altering fundamentally a naming system, it is possible to lose the nuances of the language and the history of the people.

Conclusion

Ibibio personal names have undergone generational changes, changes which have caused the names to move from lexical to phrasal and sentence-like constructions through prefixation and suffixation. The current names of the Ibibio people have principally religious undertones, a development which has altered substantially Ibibio personal names.

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